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SUBJECT: CALL ON NEW SALVADORAN DIRECTOR OF MIGRATION

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

1.(SBU) SUMMARY: The Consul General (CG), Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Attaché, Deputy CG and Consular Fraud Prevention Assistant called on Ruben Alvarado, El Salvador's new Director of the Department of Migration (Direccion de Migracion y Extranjeria), on June 10. Embassy Officers reaffirmed Post's positive relationship with the Migration Department and reviewed the areas in which we have enjoyed cooperation. Alvarado stated that the new GOES Administration was reviewing the U.S process for deporting Salvadorans and that his priorities were border security, trafficking in persons, exploitation of minors and treatment of migrants. He said that he appreciated USG assistance to his department and repeatedly emphasized his intention to continue the mutually beneficial relationship.

2.(SBU) The CG, Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Attaché, Deputy CG and Consular Fraud Prevention Assistant called on Ruben Alvarado, El Salvador's new Director of the Department of Migration, on June 10. The Director was unaccompanied during the meeting. An attorney by profession and still an alternate FMLN member of the Legislative Assembly for San Salvador, Alvarado expressed his appreciation for our request for an early meeting with him. Embassy officers thanked Alvarado for agreeing to see them so soon after assuming his new responsibilities, and noted that the Embassy and the Migration Department have long had a beneficial working relationship, particularly on time-sensitive issues.

3.(SBU) Alvarado said that his only prior experience with migration issues was as a legislator and attorney involved in oversight of the procedures of the National Citizen Registration Agency (RNPN).
(Comment: The issuance by RNPN of national identity cards, known by their Spanish initials as DUIs, has been a contentious issue in Salvadoran politics, with opposing claims by the country's two major parties-ARENA and FMLN-that RNPN and municipal officials engage in fraudulent documentation of individuals to benefit the voter base of either party. A DUI is also the basis for issuance of a Salvadoran passport. End comment.)

4.(SBU) Embassy officers provided an overview of our consular and immigration services objectives, and areas in which we worked with the Migration Department: speedy repatriation of Americans and GOES facilitation of exit authorizations; establishing the status of applicants for US immigration benefits by obtaining information from Migration Department databases; sharing information in fraud investigations; verification of documentation for visa and immigration proceedings; and developing GOES fraud prevention skills through training and use of technology.

5.(SBU) Alvarado seemed very interested in learning about the ways his agency cooperated with the Embassy. In the course of our 30-minute meeting he stated four times that his boss, the Minister of Public Security and Justice, had instructed him to continue working closely with the Embassy "in areas where cooperation is effective."

6.(SBU) The Migration Director indicated that the new GOES Administration was reviewing closely, among other bilateral issues, deportations of Salvadorans from the US, and the weekly flights into the country to return deportees. The CG noted that deportations were handled by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and that the ICE Attaché was looking forward to an early opportunity

to meet with Alvarado. (Comment: ICE Attache reported that Alvarado contacted him on June 11. End comment.)

7.(SBU) In addition to deportations, Alvarado listed his priorities as border security, trafficking in persons, the exploitation of children, and the treatment of migrants. Alvarado said that he was very concerned that other Central Americans fraudulently applied for documentation as Salvadorans, and that "even South Americans" were entering El Salvador fraudulently. The CG responded that the USG also had concerns in many of the areas cited by Alvarado as his priorities and wished to continue working with the GOES to address these concerns. The Director was aware that the Embassy had provided assistance to his agency with document checking technologies for ports of entry, and training for migration enforcement personnel. He said that he appreciated US assistance and asked about enrolling Migration Department employees, "especially the new ones," in an upcoming Federal Law Enforcement Training course offered by ICE at ILEA.

¶8. (SBU) Comment: Looking beyond his allusions to the admonition from the Minister of Public Security and Justice, Manuel Melgar, that he work closely with the Embassy, Alvarado seemed genuinely prepared to continue our working relationship. In referring to "treatment of migrants" as one of his priorities, Alvarado did not offer any specific examples of his concerns in this area, and during our meeting did not raise internal US policy issues such as Temporary Protective Status or changes to our immigration law. End comment.

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